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LETTER DATED 29 AUGUST 1997 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I.
OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF ARMENIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to forward to you herewith the facsimile transmitted letter dated 17 August 1997 addressed to you from His Excellency Mr. Leonard Petrossian, Acting President of Nagorno-Karabagh (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Movses ABELIAN
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex

Letter dated 17 August 1997 from the Acting President of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic addressed to the Secretary-General

During the past several years the Government of Azerbaijan has been actively disseminating false and fabricated information on Nagorno-Karabagh, and the consequences of the Nagorno-Karabagh armed conflict. The information provided by Azerbaijan on the occupied territories, refugees and displaced persons does not correspond to the existing realities.

We believe the unavailability of accurate and objective information to the mediators and the international community on the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict and its consequences lead to inaccurate decisions and conclusions.

The enclosed document, which is prepared on the basis of objective analysis and official sources, intends to set the record straight on a wide range of issues, and thus contribute to a better understanding of the prevailing situations, the facts about the conflict and the general environment surrounding the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict.

(Signed) Leonard PETROSSIAN
Acting President of the
Nagorno-Karabagh Republic

Appendix

Data on refugees, displaced persons and territories occupied during military actions in Nagorno-Karabagh and Azerbaijan

Nagorno-Karabagh

When reference is made to the occupied territories of Nagorno-Karabagh, t refugees and displaced persons in Nagorno-Karabagh, the authorities of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic use the names "Nagorno-Karabagh Autonomous Region", "the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic" and "Nagorno-Karabagh". The Nagorno-Karabagh Autonomous Region comprises territories bound by the administrative borders of the former Nagorno-Karabagh Autonomous Region.

The Nagorno-Karabagh Republic does not encompass all of Armenian Karabagh in its geographic, historical and ethnic entirety. Rather, it consists of the former Nagorno-Karabagh Autonomous Region together with the Shaumian district t the north. On these very territories, according to the then effective Soviet legislation, particularly article 3 of the Law of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Procedure of Cessation from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of 3 April 1990, pursuant to the 2 September 1991 Declaration of the joint session of the Nagorno-Karabagh Autonomous Region and Shaumian District Soviets of the People's Deputies and on the basis of the popular referendum of 10 December 1991, the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic was proclaimed. The population of these very territories elected and established the current authorities of th Nagorno-Karabagh Republic. In the mandate of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group of March 1992 these are referred to as "elected and other representatives of Nagorno-Karabagh".

Armenian Nagorno-Karabagh as a whole covers a considerably larger area, including the northern part of Nagorno-Karabagh (the population of which was predominantly Armenian before 1988) and other regions (this can be well observe on map 1).

Refugees and displaced persons in Nagorno-Karabagh

The Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabagh reached 300,000-330,000 in 1918. Had conditions of normal development prevailed, the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabagh would have reached 700,000-800,000 in 1988. As a result of the Turkish-Azeri aggression in 1918-1920 aimed at the total cleansing of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabagh, 20 per cent of all Armenians were killed. In Shushi, which was one of the biggest towns of the Transcaucasus, 20,000 Armenians were massacred by Turkish-Azeri troops. In spite of this, Armenians made up 95 per cent of the population of the Nagorno-Karabagh Autonomous Region when it was created in 1923, and later renamed the Nagorno-Karabagh Autonomous Region in 1936. Azeris were only 3 per cent of the population of the Region. During the 70 years of the Soviet-Azeri rule, the Armenian population did not increase in absolute numbers either in Nagorno-Karabagh as a whole or in the Nagorno-Karabagh Autonomous Region because of discrimination and forced emigration of Armenians. Today, 600,000 descendants of the Armenians of Karabagh live in Armenia and other republics of the Commonwealth of Independent

States. As a percentage of the entire Karabagh population, Armenians fell to 77 per cent. At the same time as the Armenian numbers decreased, an influx of Azeris increased their absolute number several times.

According to the official 1989 Union of Soviet Socialist Republics census, the Nagorno-Karabagh Autonomous Region had 189,000 inhabitants, of whom 145,500 (76.9 per cent) were Armenians and 40,600 (21.5 per cent) were Azeris. Another 17,000 Armenians (80 per cent of which population) and over 3,000 Azeris lived in the Shaumian district. The census, however, overlooked over 23,000 Armenian refugees from Baku, Sumgait and several other cities, who, when the census was being conducted in January 1989, actually lived in the former Nagorno-Karabagh Autonomous Region. These refugees however, had no Nagorno-Karabagh Autonomous Region "registration" (a stamp in the passports of all Soviet citizens indicating their place of residence) and hence were considered to be living in their former residences.

Thus, the total Armenian population of both the Nagorno-Karabagh Autonomous Region and the Shaumian district was 185,000; Azeris numbered 44,000 and Russians, Ukrainians, Greeks, Tatars and others about 3,500. Although the northern part of Nagorno-Karabagh was, together with the whole of Nagorno-Karabagh, given to Azerbaijan by the Russians in 1921, it was not included in the Nagorno-Karabagh Autonomous Region that was created in 1923. Neither was the Shaumian district included in the Nagorno-Karabagh Autonomous Region. The drawing of the borders of the autonomous region was entrusted by Moscow to the Azeris themselves. The borders of the northern territories of Nagorno-Karabagh, where Armenians lived in close, homogeneous settlements, were later redrawn several times and finally, as a result of the policy intended to turn the Armenian population from an overwhelming majority into a minority, these territories were divided and included in the newly created administrative districts of the Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist Republic, in the 1930s: Dashkesan, Shamkhor, Gedabek, and Khanlar. Nevertheless, in 1988 Armenians still constituted an absolute majority of the population of northern Karabagh (map 1) that included the mountainous parts and partly also the foothills of the mentioned districts of the Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist Republic.

In 1988 the following numbers of Armenians lived in this area:

Khanlar district	14 600
Dashkesan district	7 300
Shamkor district	12 400
Gedabek district	1 000
City of Gyanja	48 100
Total	83 400

The Armenian population of northern Karabagh alone was more than twice the Azeri population of the former Nagorno-Karabagh Autonomous Region. In the city

of Gyanja alone there lived 7,000 more Armenians than there were Azeris in the whole of the former Nagorno-Karabagh Autonomous Region, or four times the number of Azeris living in the town of Shushi.

Thus, by the end of 1988, the entire Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabagh as a whole (the Nagorno-Karabagh Autonomous Region, the Shaumian district and northern Nagorno-Karabagh) was 268,000.

The Armenians of northern Nagorno-Karabagh were forcibly deported in 1988-1989. Deportations started in the autumn of 1988 and came to an end already after the beginning of the open armed phase of the conflict. The last Armenian settlements in the zone, Ghetashen and Martunashen, were ravaged in April-May 1991, as a result of the joint operation of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Azerbaijan and internal troops of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. During this operation, called "Ring", 24 Armenian settlements in Nagorno-Karabagh were occupied by Azerbaijan and their entire populations were deported. Currently the overwhelming majority of the refugees from northern Nagorno-Karabagh lives in Armenia, some of them are in the Russian Federation and only a few are in the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic.

During the military actions in the summer and autumn of 1992 the Azerbaijani army completely took hold of the Shaumian district, about two thirds of the Mardakert district and parts of the Martuni, Askeran and Hadrut districts of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic. As a result, 66,000 Armenians became refugees or displaced persons. After the liberation by the Defence Army of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic of the greater part of the occupied territories (except for the Shaumian district and parts of the Mardakert and Martuni districts of Nagorno-Karabagh), 35,000 refugees returned to the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic. However either because their villages were completely destroyed or because they are still under Azeri occupation, most of these people should still be identified as displaced persons.

Thus, the total number of Armenian refugees from Nagorno-Karabagh is 114,000. Of these, 83,000 are from northern Nagorno-Karabagh and 31,000 are predominantly from the Shaumian and Mardakert districts of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic.

There are about 30,000 displaced persons in the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic.

Of the total 185,000 Armenian population of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic in 1991,[a] at present there are 61,000 refugees and displaced persons from the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic proper, thus comprising 33 per cent of the Armenian population of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic (1991 figures). This means that one third of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic population are refugees or displaced persons.

Together with the refugees of northern Nagorno-Karabagh (see above), the total number of refugees and displaced persons comes to 144,000, which is 54 per cent of the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabagh as a whole (Nagorno-Karabagh Republic and northern Nagorno-Karabagh), according to 1988 figures.

Since 1988, every other Armenian of Karabagh, of those who lived at that time on their own historic lands, has become either a refugee or a displaced person. Most of the thousands of Armenians who had lived in Baku, Sumgait and several other towns and districts of Azerbaijan and became refugees as a result of the conflict[b] descented from Karabagh. We deliberately limited ourselves to the geographic and demographic borders of Nagorno-Karabagh and do not speak here about this very large category of Armenian refugees, which may become a subject of discussion between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The figures cited above demonstrate vividly that of the two parties to the conflict, i.e., Nagorno-Karabagh and Azerbaijan (see figures concerning Azerbaijan below), the first suffers incomparably more in terms of refugees and displaced persons. It should also be added that contrary to the fact that Azeri refugees receive humanitarian aid from international organizations, the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic receives practically no assistance from such organizations for its refugees and displaced persons. Thus, we actually deal with a situation where international organizations discriminate refugees on the basis of their nationality.

Occupied territories of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic

By occupied territories of Nagorno-Karabagh the authorities of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic mean the territories of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic occupied by Azerbaijan. As already stated above, the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic does not cover the whole Armenian Karabagh in its geographic, historical and ethnic entirety, but only the territories of the former Nagorno-Karabagh Autonomous Region and the Shaumian district (see above), where the authorities of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic had full power in the beginning of open military actions.

As a result of military actions between Azerbaijan and the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic, the Azeri troops occupied in 1992 and still hold about 750 square kilometres of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic territory, which comprises 15 per cent of its area. These territories comprise the whole of the Shaumian district (600 square kilometres) and parts of the Mardakert and Martuni districts (map 2).

Azerbaijan

According to the propaganda of Azeri authorities and their official representatives, allegedly 20 per cent of the area of Azerbaijan is occupied at present and there exist more than 1 million refugees and displaced persons. It is said that this situation is a result of Armenia's aggression against Azerbaijan and the seizure by Armenia of both Nagorno-Karabagh and adjacent districts.

It should be mentioned that none of the Security Council resolutions concerning the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict contains any expression of "aggression" by Armenia or demands that its troops be withdrawn from the territory of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabagh (see Security Council resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993), 884 (1993)).

The issue of the occupied Azeri territories

According to the maps utilized by the representatives of the Azerbaijani Republic (map 3), the total area of the territories occupied by the Defence Army of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic allegedly amounts to 8,780 square kilometres, the total area of the Azerbaijani Republic being 86,600 square kilometres. A simple arithmetic calculation shows that the area of the seven, adjacent to Nagorno-Karabagh districts of Azerbaijan make up only 10 per cent of the Republic's territory. Even if we were to consider that the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic proper is itself an "occupied territory", as it is officially claimed by the leaders of Azerbaijan, the area will make only 13 per cent and not 20 per cent.[c]

As has already been mentioned, nothing has ever been said in any place in any of the documents of the United Nations or OSCE about "Armenia's occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan". That is only the result of the falsification efforts of the Azeri propaganda. As Nagorno-Karabagh cannot possibly occupy itself, then territories of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic over which the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic authorities have control (about 4,300 square kilometres) cannot principally, under any circumstances, be considered as "occupied territories of the Azerbaijani Republic".

It should particularly be mentioned that maps utilized by the Azeri side are, first, drawn on a distorted scale, as Nagorno-Karabagh and adjacent territories, in comparison with the neighbouring regions, are drawn larger than they are in reality, and second, the line of the Karabagh-Azeri military contact is drawn more eastwards than the genuine borders of the confrontation: a fact to be easily observed if Azeri maps are compared with the military and other maps used by the OSCE Minsk Group on the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict. It must be noted that the area of the occupied territories is overstated.

It is known that in the course of military actions the Defence Army of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic entirely seized five districts of Azerbaijan (Lachin, Kelbajar, Kubatly, Zangelan and Jebrail). Parts (about 30 per cent) of the Agdam and Fizuly districts have also been occupied (map 2 and maps of the OSCE Minsk Group).

According to Azerbaijani data[d] the area and population of the mentioned districts are:

District	Territory (square kilometres)	Population (thousand)
Kelbadjar	1 936	50.6
Lachin	1 835	59.9
Kubatly	802	30.3
Jebrail	1 050	51.6
Zangelan	707	33.9
Agdam	1 094	158.0
Fizuly	1 386	100.0

The total area of the first five districts is 6,330 square kilometres. The total area of the Agdam and Fizuly districts is 2,480 square kilometres, however the Defence Army of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic controls 35 per cent of Agdam and 25 per cent of Fizuly districts, i.e., respectively 383 and 347 square kilometres. Hence, the figure of 8,780 square kilometres of area of occupied territories claimed by the Azeri side is a falsification as well.

The total area of the territory of the Azerbaijan controlled by the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic is not 8,780 square kilometres. It is instead 7,059 square kilometres, which is 8 per cent of the area of the former Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist Republic, i.e., it is 2.5 times smaller than 20 per cent, a figure constantly mentioned by the leaders and representatives of the Azerbaijani Republic, deliberately misleading the international community and world public opinion. It should also be mentioned that Azerbaijan occupies 15 per cent of the territories of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic.

Refugees and displaced persons in Azerbaijan

A total of 168,000 Azeris left Armenia in 1988-1989.[e] Most of the 168,000 who left Armenia after 8 to 10 months of the Armenian pogroms in Sumgait and forced deportation of 350,000 Armenians from the Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist Republic were able to exchange or sell their houses built in rural areas. The rest received financial compensation (a total of 72 million roubles or about US$ 100 million at the exchange rate of the time) from the Government of Armenia (Armenian refugees have received no compensation to this date).

Virtually the whole Azeri population, 40,600 people or 21.5 per cent of the population of the former Nagorno-Karabagh Autonomous Region (according to the 1989 Union of Soviet Socialist Republics census), left the former Nagorno-Karabagh Autonomous Region during the military actions. It should be mentioned that Azerbaijan deliberately overstates the number of the Azeri population of the former Nagorno-Karabagh Autonomous Region, speaking of "60,000 people" or about "a third of the population".

The Azeri population of the Shaumian district stayed further to live in their homes in all of the four Azeri villages situated along the border, in the northern and southern parts of the district (the line of Karabagh-Azeri front passed here in 1992-1993). So has the Azeri population, living on the territories adjacent to and in the very settlements of northern Nagorno-Karabagh, from where 83,000 Karabagh Armenians were deported in 1988-1991, did not suffer as well. Moreover, more than 100,000 Azeri refugees were housed in the abandoned homes and apartments of Armenians driven out of the northern part of Nagorno-Karabagh.[f]

According to Azerbaijani data cited above, the population of the seven districts that have been either entirely or partially occupied by the Defence Army of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic was 483,000 in 1989. Taking into account that the Agdam and Fizuly districts are occupied partially, the total number of displaced persons who have left those districts constituted about 420,000, of which 45,000, according again to Azerbaijani data, returned to their homes in 1997. Thus, of the total number of the inhabitants of the seven districts, only 375,000 are refugees and displaced persons.[g] These, in addition to the figures

cited above of the number of refugees from Armenia (168,000, who however, because they have exchanged their houses or received compensation, may hardly be called refugees) and from Nagorno-Karabagh (40,000), comprise the total number of refugees and displaced persons in Azerbaijan.

Hence, as a result of the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict, there are 583,000 refugees and displaced persons in Azerbaijan, comprising 7.9 per cent of a population that has been officially declared. Claims about "a million refugees in Azerbaijan" are false and so is the claim about "20 per cent occupied territories of Azerbaijan".

It should be recalled that one third of the population of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic are refugees and displaced persons. According to data from the Republic of Armenia, refugees comprise 12 per cent of the population of Armenia. Apart from them, 300,000 people remained without shelter after the 1988 earthquake, while a blockade has been imposed on Armenia by Azerbaijan and Turkey.

Main comparative data

Territory of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic occupied by Azerbaijan	Territories of the Azerbaijan controlled by the Defence Army of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic
15 per cent	8 per cent
Refugees and displaced persons in the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic (as a percentage of the population)	**Refugees and displaced persons in Azerbaijan (as a percentage of the population)**
33 per cent	7.9 per cent

Notes

[a] Information is based on the following sources:

- The 1989 Soviet Union census;
- The Department of the Statistics of the Regional Soviet of the Nagorno-Karabagh Autonomous Region;
- The Regional Executive Committee of the Shaumian district;
- . The Committee on Refugees of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic.

[b] More than 350,000 Armenians left Azerbaijan and now live in Armenia.

[c] Taking into account the territories that both Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabagh have occupied from each other.

[d] Sources:

- Data of the Ministry of Defence of the Azerbaijani Republic, disseminated by the Embassy of the Azerbaijani Republic in the Russian Federation in the autumn of 1994;

- 1989 census in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics;

- Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist Republic, Administrative-Territorial Division, Azgosizdat, Baku, 1979;

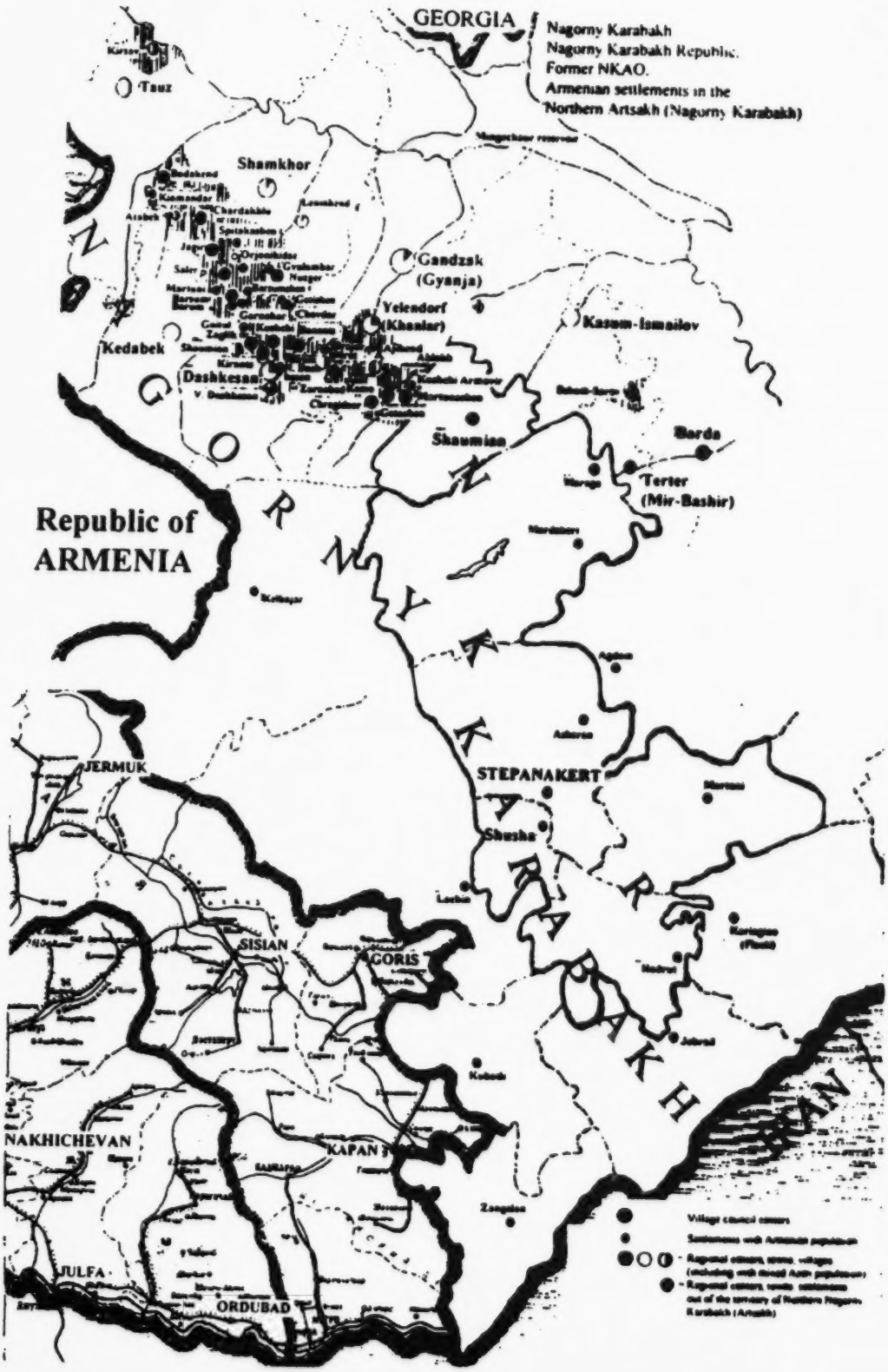
- Mukhalifat (Azeri newspaper), 4 March 1996, etc.

[e] This is the original figure of Azeris living in Armenia in the beginning of 1988 although Baku arbitrarily speaks of some 200,000 or 250,000 Azeris.

[f] According to the 1989 Union of Soviet Socialist Republics census, the average Azeri family in the Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist Republic consisted of 5.6 persons and the average Armenian family in the Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist Republic of 3.85 persons. Apart from that, as a result of 70 years of discriminatory policies against the Armenians in the Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist Republic and driving them out of the republic, there were many empty Armenian houses in Azerbaijan. The owners of these houses had left for Armenia, Russia and other republics of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics earlier.

[g] Of these 40,000 have left for the Russian Federation. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, 1.5 million Azeris, citizens of Azerbaijan, live in the Russian Federation currently.

Map 1


GEORGIA
Nagorny Karabakh
Nagorny Karabakh Republic.
Former NKAO.
Armenian settlements in the
Northern Artsakh (Nagorny Karabakh)
Tauz
Shamkhor
Gandzak
(Gyanja)
Yelenedorf
(Khanlar)
Kasum-Ismailov
Kedabek
Dashkesan
Shaumian
Barda
Terter
(Mir-Bashir)
Republic of
ARMENIA
GORNYY KARABAKH
JERMUK
STEPANAKERT
Shusha
SISIAN
GORIS
NAKHICHEVAN
KAPAN
JULFA
ORDUBAD
AZERBAIJAN
Village council centers
Settlements with Armenian population
Regional centers, towns, villages
(including small detail Azeri population)
Regional centers, towns, settlements
out of the territory of Northern Nagorny
Karabakh (Artsakh)

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Map 2

THIS MAP WAS PROVIDED TO THE INDEPENDENT EXPERTS BY THE AUTHORITIES OF THE RA AND THE NK

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Map 3

This map was provided to the Independent Expert by the authorities of Azerbaijan. The delineated areas shown do not imply official endorsement or acceptance.